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RUEHVJ/AMEMBASSY SARAJEVO 0180  
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FOR EUR/SCE SAINZ AND BALIAN

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [HR](#)

SUBJECT: AMBASSADOR'S MEETING WITH HSP ADVISOR MATE GRANIC

Classified By: Ambassador Robert A. Bradtke for reasons 1.4(b) and (d).

11. (C) Summary: Ambassador met September 22 with former foreign minister and "strategic advisor" to the Croatian Party of Rights (HSP) Mate Granic at the latter's request. Granic described the recent evolution of the HSP's world view as it sought to shed its nationalistic image and become a mainstream center-right political party. He pressed for a meeting between the Ambassador and HSP leader Anto Dapic. The Ambassador demurred for the present, noting that contact with the HSP could continue with the political section until the HSP had provided more evidence it had moderated its policy. End Summary.

12. (C) Granic described his effort to help the HSP project the more moderate image of a traditional European center-right party: party leader Anto Dapic has visited Israel's Yad Vashem to atone for his party's Nazi collaboration during WWII; Dapic has established good relations with the Serbian Orthodox church and visited Serbia; and HSP has fully "normalized relations" with the ruling Croatian Democratic Union (HDZ); in fact, PM Sanader will support HSP to become an observer in the European Peoples' Party next spring, per Granic. The HSP has now become a "mainstream" center-right political party, Granic noted. He added that, during the fall 2007 parliamentary election the HSP will not campaign against Croatian Serbs or Serbia. A key element of HSP's philosophy is closer relations with the U.S., Granic said, noting that the party was ready to accept policy suggestions from the USG. He concluded by asking the Ambassador to meet with Dapic, whose contacts with Embassy Zagreb have been limited to the political section for several years.

13. (C) Thanking Granic for his views, the Ambassador noted that he would follow the elections next year, but would not take sides. He said that the Embassy had good contacts with HSP party officials via the political section, and had included HSP parliamentarians in Embassy events such as the annual NATO tour for MPs. He welcomed Granic's comment that HSP had become a party of tolerance, and a mainstream European center-right party. However, he continued, nationalism has been a problem with the HSP in recent memory, and it is necessary to measure today's HSP aspirations against its provocative statements in the recent past.

14. (C) The Ambassador concluded that the time was not yet right for him to meet with Dapic, but he wanted Embassy contacts with the HSP to continue at other levels. He emphasized that "not now" did not mean "not ever," adding that he would like to see more progress on moderating HSP's

positions.

15. (C) Comment: The sophisticated and scripted Granic must wince in apprehension every time his protege Dapic goes out on his own. Dapic's latest outrageous statement was that convicted terrorist Zvonko Basic, soon to be deported from the U.S. to Croatia following his release from prison related to a 1976 airplane hijacking, should be "given a hero's welcome." Granic believes that a meeting with the Ambassador would give Dapic the "seal of approval" he needs to boost his party's 10% rating in the polls. Due both to his effort to include the USG in his election strategy and his continued unregenerate outbursts we believe it is best to keep Dapic at arm's length from the Ambassador for now. However, we will have to consider our equities carefully in coming months since an HSP role in a future HDZ-led government following the 2007 elections is not out of the question.  
BRADTKE